

Somewhere

Thomas Metcalf

This place lives somewhere
in concrete and in plastic
along highways and cul-de-sacs
under gum-covered desks

People are not alive there
they live there
and watch the years recede
into golden waving wheat

Measuring lives in ones and zeroes
Measuring lives in volume, not weight

Fresh-cut grass spins a new story
(The smell seeping into fabric)
Dead men did, children will, you don't
think of anchors or forlorn glory
Because movies are still promises

There are pictures of trees
and statues of people
that smile and shine
and look very pretty
But they all move slower at a distance

Endless black deserts
meet the sky in a kiss
where a town consumes eyes
and runs faster than desire

There's a man on every corner
Yelling at empty ears
Ten-dollar words can't pay his mortgage

When we leave, the words and the noise
and the drinks and the joy
and the sex and the shouts
and the smoke and the doubts
and the bedrooms
rise up, dissolve,
and become new breath
to breathe the same questions:

Do you see the beauty in dirt?
Do you see the beauty in ash?
Can you hear the sound of thick rushing blood?
Did you melt yourself down?
Did you sink into the soil?
Did you say, "I love you mom"?
Have you seen a padlock mouth?
Have you made one from two?
Can't you see the beauty in dirt?

Birds are flying east
They can't leave
Rain destroyed the grasses
The grasses will be missed